

JOINT FINANCE COMMITTEE, CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS COMMITTEE AND SELECTBOARD
MEETING MINUTES
1 AVENUE A, TURNERS FALLS, MA
WEDNESDAY, MARCH 17, 2021

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Meeting was opened at 6:01 PM by remote participation via Zoom

- **Montague Finance Committee members:** Jen Audley, Greg Garrison, Chris Menegoni, Francia Wisnewski, Fred Bowman, Jennifer Waryas, and John Hanold.
- **Montague Selectboard members:** Rich Kuklewicz, Michael Nelson, and Chris Boutwell
- **CIC members:** Josh Lively, Greg Garrison, Steve Ellis, and Fred Bowman
- **Others:** Town Administrator Steve Ellis, Town Accountant Carolyn Olsen, Public Works Superintendent Tom Bergeron, and Police Chief Chris Williams

The Chair announced that the meeting is being streamed and recorded by the MCTV and asked if anyone else was recording the meeting. Ms. Olsen is also recording the meeting. Remote participation for both members and the public was provided by Zoom. The link to the recording is <https://vimeo.com/525708490>.

Review of FY 2022 Budget Requests Assessors (Department 141)

Ms. Tonelli sent word that her staffing plan for FY2022 includes hiring a part-time Feld Inspector to replace the vacant full-time position of Administrative Assistant, and the plan is being reviewed with the union. This is expected to reduce her request.

Police (Department 211)

Chief Williams reported that no budget-driven recommendations are likely to be received from the Advisory Groups on Community Policing and Equity & Use of Force, and Mr. Kuklewicz noted that those groups' recommendations will be evaluated by the Selectboard, which will take some time. A brief polling of the Committee indicated that it is willing to approve the budget as submitted.

Finance Committee Moved: To approve Police FY22 budget of \$1,814,945.

Vote: Audley-Aye, Waryas-Aye, Wisnewski-Aye, Garrison-Aye, Bowman-Aye, Menegoni-Aye, and Hanold-Aye

Education (Department 300)

No revisions to the preliminary budgets presented on March 3 were presented. A vote on the assessments will occur when the warrant is reviewed.

Town Meeting (Department 113)

Mr. Ellis announced that the requested remote-meeting services are eligible for payment by CARES funds, and will be removed from this department's request.

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Finance Committee Moved: To approve Town Meeting FY2022 budget of \$2,140, revised down from \$3,140.

Vote: Audley-Aye, Waryas-Aye, Wisnewski-Aye, Garrison-Aye, Bowman-Aye, Menegoni-Aye, and Hanold-Aye.

Public Works: (Department 420)

Mr. Bergeron presented a revision of his request, to delete two added Grounds personnel and increase the part-time labor portion of the budget to use more part-time seasonal help. It also reduces the requested Diesel request and level-funds Snow & Ice.

Finance Committee Moved: To approve combined Public Works budget of \$1,544,245.

Vote: Audley-Aye, Waryas-Aye, Wisnewski-Aye, Garrison-Aye, Bowman-Aye, Menegoni-Aye, and Hanold-Aye:

Tree Warden (Department 299)

The increase from FY21 to FY22 is caused by an increase in Tree Removal costs from \$17,000 to \$27,000 to allow more tree work to be done in the absence of the two new grounds maintenance employees. Mr. Bergeron also mentioned that the possible retirement of the elected Tree Warden from Public Works may cause an adjustment in working arrangements depending on who is elected in his place.

Finance Committee Moved: To approve Tree Warden FY2022 budget of \$30,285.

Vote: Audley-Aye, Waryas-Aye, Wisnewski-Aye, Garrison-Aye, Bowman-Aye, Menegoni-Aye, and Hanold-Aye.

Capital Improvements Committee Report

CIC Chair Mr. Lively presented their report, which recommends approval of all projects submitted to them except the late-arrival Sheffield Complex Roof.

Mr. Bergeron answered questions concerning purchase of a six-wheel dump truck for \$250,000 and a \$100,000 appropriation to the DPW Discretionary Fund. The existing truck is 25 years old, and the recurring repairs are difficult because of the lack of parts availability. Discussion on the size of the appropriation to the Discretionary Fund centered on the mix of capital and expense items and his forecast of expenses. Mr. Bergeron expects to use the balance (approx. \$12,000) by the end of FY2021. The Committee is satisfied with the rationale for both amounts, and will vote on them when the warrant is reviewed on April 7. The customary funding source was raised by Ms. Wisnewski, and was also deferred after discussion. (After the meeting Ms. Olsen confirmed that it has been Taxation since FY2018.)

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The Phase II Environmental study of 500 Avenue A (former DPW garage) was briefly reviewed; the hope is that qualified bidders will be more interested if the available studies are more comprehensive. No further questions were raised.

Façade repairs to Sheffield and Hillcrest elementary school buildings were carried forward from last year's withdrawal due to COVID concerns and will remediate familiar issues. Fire alarm upgrades at Sheffield are safety issues and are supported. Re-surfacing of the tennis courts at Turners Falls High School is also carried forward from last year, and is supported by Ms. Wisniewski and others, in part for their use by community residents.

The three projects proposed by the Town Administrator will be considered on March 24.

Preparation for Meeting on March 24

Ms. Audley reported that the Selectboard has delayed Annual Town Meeting to a later date. This leaves us a little more time to consider ways to balance the budget.

Mr. Nelson left at 8:05.

Updates from Town Administrator and Accountant

Ms. Olsen said that she had sign-up information for a webinar on Procurement and related issues, and members could contact her for them.

Topics not Anticipated in Last 48 Hours

No news was shared.

Agendas for Future Meetings

March 24 – Clerk, Assessor and Treasurer budget changes; CIC items; Use of Reserves

March 31 – Balancing the budget

April 7 - Review of FY2022 Annual Town Meeting Warrant

Adjournment

Finance Committee Moved: To adjourn at 8:15 PM.

Vote: Audley-Aye, Waryas-Aye, Wisniewski-Aye, Garrison-Aye, Bowman-Aye, Menegoni-Aye, and Hanold-Aye.

Selectboard Moved: To adjourn at 8:15 PM

Vote: Kuklewicz-Aye, Boutwell-Aye

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CIC: Moved to adjourn at 8:15 PM

Vote: Lively-Aye, Garrison-Aye, Bowman=-Aye, Ellis-Aye.

Respectfully submitted by John Hanold

List of Documents and Exhibits:

- FY2022 Budget requests
- Report of Capital Improvements Committee